

I had moments where tears fell—of joy—and the privilege of talking to and meeting these men, watching them receive the honor from the French people, and as we walked through the streets even today, the people of France were saying thank you with a degree of emotion that knew that they would not be free, they would not be liberated, they would not be France if it had not been for those boys who left the soil of this United States; or those who came from Guadeloupe and Martinique, men of color who came and were trained from Fort Dix and then fought on the shores; or my uncle, who fought in Tunis and Ethiopia; and others who left my widowed grandmother, her three sons, leaving one behind—all of us have been touched.

So it is important that, even as we look to the status of Sergeant Bergdahl, that we look at it in a spirit of fairness, not grandstanding, not partisan politics, but finding out the facts and realizing that America is greater than divisive politics when you look to the Greatest Generation of which we have now been given the gift of their life, their sacrifice.

No one will be the same after they have walked amongst the white crosses that represent the blood shed by America, not to conquer Europe, but to free Europe. That is our mantra, and that is what we should do for the American people, not to conquer them, but to free them from violence, from inconsistent policies, and certainly from the inability to vote.

I pay tribute to the 70th commemoration of the brilliance of America and the spirit of her youth, and I tell everyone that that brilliance and that spirit is not lost upon us today.

I am happy because I know that embedded in all of those who walk the streets of this Nation and call themselves an American have that same spirit, and we can make a difference in this country for all of those who need us.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, along with other Members of Congress, I attended a classified briefing on the swap of our soldier for the five Taliban leaders. I won't go into that, but I did have an opportunity to make a comment to the presenters.

I made a comment regarding my concern about the bilateral strategic agreement, known as BSA, and the fact that we continue to spend money in Afghanistan that we borrow from foreign nations.

Mr. Speaker, beside me today, I have a cartoon that was created by Mr. Milt Priggee, and it makes a point very well. It has Uncle Sam pointing out saying:

I want you.

Then the language beside it says:

To understand that if you can't afford to take care of your veterans, you can't afford to go to war.

Well, that makes my point very well because we seem to find all the money we need for Afghanistan to waste, and we know that waste, fraud, and abuse is worse today than it has ever been in the 12 years we have been in Afghanistan.

I would like to quote from the Daily Journal Online. The title is, "No end for Afghanistan's war on the U.S. taxpayer." I want to read two paragraphs from this online article:

John Sopko, the inspector general for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), may have taken Uncle Sam and shaken him by the lapels last month, but the media missed it. In short, Afghanistan is on life support, and Joe Citizen is its permanent IV. From your pockets, Uncle Sam has taken \$103 billion to build Afghanistan so far.

By the way, that figure doesn't include the cost of war-making. That is more money than we have spent on reconstruction for any one country in the history of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I just heard the Congressman from Connecticut talking about the infrastructure of his State, as well as America, and the poor shape it is in, but yet we find all the money we need for Afghanistan, so we can build their roads, so that the Taliban can blow up the roads. It makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, SIGAR, on the job since 2008, has produced 118 audits and inspection reports and made 23 quarterly reports to Congress. I have read a few of these, certainly not all, but all you have to do is hear Mr. Sopko speak or read some of the reports from his organization, and you will be disgusted, as I am disgusted, with the stupidity of continuing to find money for Afghanistan while we cut programs right here in America.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I went to Walter Reed Hospital. I knew there were two marines who had been injured in Afghanistan from my district, Camp Lejeune, which is in the Third District of North Carolina.

I happened, while being there, to meet four soldiers, one a colonel from Fort Bragg, which is not in my district, but in North Carolina. All four had lost at least one leg. Then when I met this young man from Louisiana, who is a marine from Camp Lejeune, his father was standing beside him.

He had lost both legs and an arm, and he is 23 years of age. I looked in the eyes of the father, who could not have been more than 50. I saw pain. I saw hurt. I saw worry about the future of his son's life, missing two legs and an arm.

Why are we still sending troops to Afghanistan? Yes, we are going to cut the troops, but we are going to keep 9,000 to 10,000 there. The Taliban will still go after them and try to blow off their legs and kill them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote Pat Buchanan, who I have great respect

for, particularly on foreign policy, because he and I agree:

Is it not a symptom of senility to be borrowing from the world so we can defend the world?

Let me repeat that:

Is it not a symptom of senility to be borrowing from the world so we can defend the world?

Mr. Speaker, I would put one word in there. I would change "senility" to "stupidity," and I will read it now: Is it not a symptom of stupidity to be borrowing from the world, so we defend the world?

Mr. Speaker, again, Uncle Sam is saying, Don't spend money overseas when you have got problems right here in America and our veterans are not being adequately cared for.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end the spending in Afghanistan. It is time to stop sending our troops over there to be killed and have their legs and arms blown off.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask God to continue to bless America and bless our men and women in uniform.

INDIA'S SANITATION CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the recent news account of a horrific murder and rape of two young girls in India shocked our consciousness, but one of the items that was interesting is that few of the news accounts actually detailed what put those young women at risk.

Julie McCarthy of NPR had a story which highlighted one of the greatest human global health challenges that created this situation. They were indeed attacked, raped, and hung from a tree after they were caught in a field.

These two young women didn't have access to a toilet, and like so many women around the world, but particularly in India, they went out in the fields at night to relieve themselves, and they went in a pair to minimize the likelihood that they would be isolated.

This is offensive on so many levels. It is emblematic of violence against women, the vicious attitudes by people towards lower castes, and the complicated dynamic of castes in rural India.

It is also testimony to the need to be able to have these young women—and others around the globe—have access to adequate sanitation facilities, so they don't have to sneak out at night or early in the morning, cloaked in darkness to disguise their embarrassment, to use a nearby field as their restroom.

One-half of India's population uses open fields for defecation. Fewer than half of Indian households have a toilet. The women and girls perform a ritual to deal with this most basic bodily function, often in fear and trepidation.